596 even the compound. As a rule, the work group is not composed of a single household but of two or more. We are dealing here, therefore, with a highly disintegrated communal family. Let us state immediately that the family among the Foulsé /Fulse/ and Yarsé /Yarse/, which we shall describe later /not translated/, is less disintegrated than the Mossi family, while the Samo family is even less so than the Foulsé and Yarsé families.

• 611 As far as matriarchy and patriarchy are concerned, the Mossi family of Yatenga is patriarchal, that is to say, the family revolves around the man rather than the woman. This is a clearly documented fact. There are, however, some indications, as we shall see, that permit us to inquire whether once upon a time, very long ago, the Mossi family was not matriarchal. In our Noir du Soudan /The Black Population of the Sudan/ we pointed out various indications of the same sort about the Gourounsi /Grunshi/.

In sum, the Mossi family of Yatenga is (1) communal and quite disintegrated and (2) patriarchal.

592 596 162 Examples. —Let us first list some statistical figures. Here is a table summarizing some important censuses taken among the Mossi of Yatenga.

Localities	Families	Compounds	Number of Persons
Diogoré and Lako (small cantons)	25	78	3, 165
Small canton of Tangay	11	51	1, 241
Village of Dio	7	50	842
Totals	43	179	5, 248

This set of figures yields an average of 122 persons per family, four compounds or iri or zaka per family, and 29 persons per compound.

Now for some details.

In the village of Tangay (canton of Tangay) there are 11 Mossi families. Here are the figures for the persons who compose them and the compounds where they live.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

tween the Mossi and several other ethnic groups. In each instance the structural relationship in which joking occurs is characterized by the five features listed above.

Joking with the Mother's Brother

The relationship with a maternal uncle is marked by all five of the structural features mentioned. Separation results from the rules of patrilineal descent and inheritance rules, from patrisib exogamy, and from the general observance of patrilocal residence. The relationship is reciprocal in that a mother's brother serves throughout Ego's life as an important alternative source of emotional, economic, and social support: he often acts as intermediary in disputes between Ego and his parents or the elders of his lineage; he gives Ego frequent gifts; and residence in the mother's patriclan is the most frequent alternative to patrilocality. In turn Ego, as a result of the permissive relationship he enjoys with the spirits of his deceased cognatic kinsmen, often serves their living descendants as an intermediary in their ritual efforts to maintain a secure relationship with the ancestral spirits.

Ambivalence between Ego and his mother's brother and her other kin results from the conflicting sources of "conjunction" and "dissociation" just mentioned. The conflict between a strong affective bond—a "feeling" of kinship—and a system of inheritance which denies it jural recognition generates frustration. The ambivalence in the relationship is manifested not only by joking, which is asymmetrical—with Ego being the more aggressive—but by theft as well. Perhaps as partial compensation for his inability to inherit matrilaterally, Ego is permitted to steal his mother's brother's property during his lifetime and can also make off with the beer and some of the animals collected for his funeral.

As for equality of status, the descent groups of Ego and mother's brother are structurally equivalent. Although their respective positions within these two groups differ, the permissiveness of Ego's relationship to his maternal uncle absolves him from recognition of the canons of comportment that otherwise prevail among the Mossi in relations between persons of differing status. Indeed, disregard for such status differences is part of the "joke." Independence is assured by the fact that Ego and his mother's brother are members of autonomous descent groups and that each is responsive only to the authority of his respective lineage elders.

Joking with a Mother's Brother's Wife

Joking between Ego and his mother's brother's wife is to be regarded as a separate relationship because of her nonmembership in the mother's brother's descent group, but certain of the structural circumstances are similar. The source of separation from the mother's brother's wife is evident. The reciprocal tie that unites them is indirect; when Ego is received warmly in his mother's brother's household it is the wife of the latter who prepares the food he is given. Similarly, as a member of her husband's patriclan, she benefits